



PRAYERS ON THE BIRTH OF A CHILD



HOLY ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF BOSTON

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Look down now also upon Thy handmaid (*name*), who hath involuntarily miscarried that which she had conceived; have mercy upon her and forgive her voluntary and involuntary offences. Shelter her under the shelter of Thy wings from this day even unto her final end. Cleanse her from bodily filth and the divers inward disturbances which assail her, and give strength and health to both her soul and body; may radiant angels of light cherish and compass her round about, guarding her from every assault of evil spirits; and as Thou didst preserve without pangs and sorrow the Virgin who bore Thee, for she yet remained a virgin even after giving birth, be Thou well-pleased, O greatly merciful Lord, so also to deliver this Thy handmaid from every device of the adversary; and in Thy grace and holiness, purify and sanctify her with the gift and descent of Thy Holy Spirit; so that by her, and by all creation, and also by us Thy worthless servants, the all-holy Name of the one dominion and divinity and kingdom be glorified; to which is due all glory, honour, and worship, might, and both greatness and majesty, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Then the Litany:

Have mercy on us, O God, . . .
Again we pray for mercy. . .
For a merciful and man-befriending God. . .

And the Dismissal.

Prayers on the Birth of a Child

On the first day of his birth

The priest entereth the house where the child is with his mother. He shall begin Blessed is our God, always. . . Holy God. All-holy Trinity. Our Father. *After the exclamation, the following dismissal hymns.*

Fourth Tone

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath shined the light of knowledge upon the world; for thereby, they that worshipped the stars were instructed by a star to worship Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Dayspring from on high. O Lord, glory be to Thee.

Fourth Tone

Thy Nativity, O Theotokos, hath proclaimed joy to the whole world; for from thee hath dawned the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, annulling the curse, and bestowing the blessing, abolishing death and granting us life everlasting.

Then he shall say the following prayers:

Let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.

Prayer for the Child

O Lord Almighty, the God of Hosts, Who hast made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that therein is; Who hast fashioned man from the dust and built up woman from his side and joined them together saying: "Increase and multiply and fill the earth"; Who for our

sake wast born from the all-spotless Lady and Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary; and, newly born, wast laid in a manger and wast seen as an infant, we give Thee thanks that Thou hast been well-pleased for a man to be born into the world from Thy servants (*name and name*); and we beseech Thee, O Lord our God: Bless this infant here present as Thou didst once bless the children brought before Thee; and grant him (*her*) life and increase; and preserve him (*her*) unassailable from the plots of the enemy; vouchsafe him (*her*) the laver of regeneration and make him (*her*) a precious vessel of Thy holiness; and through participation in Thine immaculate and divine Mysteries, prove him (*her*) an inheritor of Thine eternal Kingdom. For Thou, O Lord, art He Who preserveth the infants, and unto Thee do we send up glory, together with the Father, Who is without beginning, and Thine all-holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.

A Prayer for the Mother

O sovereign Lord, Jesus Christ, Word of God and Only-begotten Son of the Father, Thou Who for our salvation didst descend at the end of the ages into the womb of the holy Virgin; and in the good pleasure of the Father, Who is without beginning, and with the cooperation of the life-giving Spirit, Who is of the same essence and eternity, Thou wast made flesh, wast carried and born of her beyond expectation and words, as Thou alone knowest: Look down now also upon Thy handmaid (*name*), who

He Who deigneth to be held in the arms of the just Symeon for our salvation, even Christ our true God. . . *



Prayer for a woman when she hath miscarried

The priest shall give the blessing. Holy God. All-holy Trinity. Our Father, *and the exclamation.* Then the dismissal hymn of the day, or of the Saint of the Temple. Glory; both now, the Theotokion: By the intercession, O Lord, of all the Saints, and the Theotokos, do Thou grant us Thy peace, and have mercy on us, since Thou alone art compassionate.

Let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.

O sovereign Lord, Jesus Christ, Word of God and Only-begotten Son of the Father, Thou Who for our salvation didst descend at the end of the ages into the womb of the holy Virgin; and in the good pleasure of the Father, Who is without beginning, and with the cooperation of the life-giving Spirit, Who is of the same essence and eternity, Thou wast made flesh, wast carried and born of her beyond expectation and words, as Thou alone knowest:

* Note: As an alternative, Symeon of Thessalonica hath the priest bearing a male child through the south door of the sanctuary, behind the holy table and out the north door, and then laying the child down before the holy gates, saying: Now lettest Thou Thy servant. . . and making the dismissal. If the child be female, she is not taken into the sanctuary, but laid down before the Holy Gates, and the priest shall say: Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart. . . , and then the dismissal.

The servant (*handmaid*) of God (*name*) is church'd in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

And he shall carry the child into the temple, saying:

I shall go into Thy house; I shall worship toward Thy holy temple in fear of Thee.

Reaching the middle of the temple, he shall make the sign of the Cross with the child, saying:

The servant (*handmaid*) of God (*name*) is church'd in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Then he shall add:

In the midst of the Church will I hymn Thee.

And arriving at the gates of the holy altar (sanctuary), he again shall make the sign of the Cross with the infant, saying again:

The servant (*handmaid*) of God (*name*) is church'd in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

He bringeth him (her) into the holy altar while saying, Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart, O Master. . . And if the infant be a male, he shall go about the Holy Table, making a reverence at the front and all the sides. If the infant be female, no reverence is made in the front, but only on the remaining three sides. Returning without, he shall place the child down before the Holy Gates and he shall give the dismissal. The sponsor shall kiss the priest's hand and take up the child.

hath given birth to this child, and visit both her soul and body, being supplicated by our all-glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, the holy, glorious, and all-famed Apostles, the holy, glorious Unmercenary Healers, and all the Saints. Shelter her under the shelter of Thy wings from this day unto her final end. Cleanse her from bodily filth and the divers inward disturbances which assail her, and give strength and health to both her soul and body; may radiant angels of light cherish and compass her round about, guarding her from every assault of evil spirits; and as Thou didst preserve without pangs and sorrow the Virgin who bore Thee, for she yet remained a virgin even after giving birth, O greatly merciful Lord, be Thou well-pleased so also to deliver from every device of the adversary, her who even now hath given birth; and in Thy grace and holiness, purify and sanctify her with the gift and descent of Thy Holy Spirit; and if she hath sinned in any way, either willingly or unwillingly, forgive her as Thou art a good God that lovest mankind; so that by her, and by all creation, and also by us Thy worthless servants, the all-holy Name of the one dominion and divinity and kingdom be glorified; to which is due all glory, honour, and worship, might, and both greatness and majesty, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.



Prayer for the house and those dwelling therein

Let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.

O Lord our God, Who camest for the salvation of the race of man, come also and bless this house and them that dwell herein, together with both her who hath given birth and her child, even as Thou didst bless the cave in Bethlehem and the house of Zachaeus; and bestow upon them sanctification and spiritual blessing through the grace of Thy Christ. Deliver them from every adversary; spread over them and us Thy mighty shelter, so that they might be piloted by Thy providence to be well-pleasing to Thee, and in all things always to glorify Thy holy Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

The dismissal is made thus:

He Who was born in a cave and laid in a manger for our salvation, Christ our true God. . .



The following prayer may be read in the home, or in the porch or the narthex of the Church.

Prayer at the sealing of a child, receiving his name upon the eighth day after his birth.

The priest giveth the blessing, then: the Holy God. All-holy Trinity. Our Father. After the exclamation, the following dismissal hymn.

The Priest:

Peace be unto all

Bow your heads unto the Lord.

O God the Father Almighty, Who by that mighty voice among the prophets, Esaias, hast foretold unto us the incarnation of Thine Only-begotten Son and our God of the Virgin; in Thy good pleasure and through the cooperation of the Holy Spirit for the salvation of us mortals, He was born as a babe of her in these last days out of immeasurable compassion; and according to the custom in Thy holy Law, after the days of purification were fulfilled, He suffered to be brought to the Temple, for He is the true Lawgiver; and He deigned to be held in the arms of the just Symeon; of which mystery we have recognized the foreshadowing spoken of by the aforementioned prophet in the tongs and the coal; and we the faithful follow the example of this mystery in grace: O Lord, Who preserveth the infants, bless this child together with his (*her*) parents and sponsors, and grant him (*her*) at the right time rebirth through water and the Spirit; number him (*her*) together with Thy holy flock of reason-endowed sheep, who are called by the Name of Thy Christ. For Thou art He Who dwellest on high and lookest down on things that are lowly, and unto Thee we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

The priest shall take up the child and make a cross with the child before the gates of the temple, saying:

her refuge in Thy holy catholic Church and entrance into the temple of Thy glory, also accounting her worthy of the communion of the precious Body and Blood of Thy Christ; that having been granted entrance into Thy holy temple, she might glorify Thine all-holy Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

[If the child be not among the living, the priest here maketh the dismissal; otherwise he shall continue to the end.]

Another prayer for the child, whom the priest shall seal as he readeth it over him:

O Lord our God, Who wast brought on the fortieth day as an infant into the Temple of the Law by Mary, Thy holy mother who knew not wedlock, and wast borne in the arms of the just Symeon: Do Thou, O Omnipotent Master, bless this infant brought hither to be presented unto Thee, the Creator of all, and grant increase in every good work that is well-pleasing unto Thee, driving far off every adverse power with the sealing of the sign of Thy Cross; so that being vouchsafed Holy Baptism, he (*she*) may gain the portion of the elect in Thy Kingdom, being preserved together with us in the grace of the holy and consubstantial and indivisible Trinity. For Thou art He Who preserveth the infants, O Lord, and unto Thee is due all glory and thanksgiving and worship, together with Thy Father, Which is without beginning, and with Thine all-holy and good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

First Tone. While Gabriel was saying

Our human form hast Thou taken on Thyself without change, * O greatly-compassionate Master, though being God by nature; * fulfilling the Law, Thou willingly * receivest circumcision in the flesh, * that Thou mightest end the shadow and roll away * the veil of our sinful passions. * Glory be to Thy goodness unto us. * Glory be to Thy compassion. * Glory, O Word, to Thine inexpressible condescension.

The priest shall seal the forehead, the mouth, and the breast of the babe and say the following prayer:

Let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.

O Lord our God, we pray unto Thee and we beseech Thee: Let the light of Thy countenance be signed upon Thy servant (*handmaid*) (*name*) and let the Cross of Thine Only-begotten Son be signed in his (*her*) heart and thoughts, so that he (*she*) might flee the vanity of the world and every evil snare of the enemy to follow after Thy commandments. O Lord, grant that Thy holy Name abide unrejected by him (*her*), and that in due time he (*she*) be united to Thy holy Church and be perfected by the dread Mysteries of Thy Christ; that by walking in Thy commandments and by keeping the seal unbroken, he (*she*) might attain the bliss of the Saints in Thy Kingdom. Through the grace and love for man of Thine Only-begotten Son, together with Thine all-holy and good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

The Dismissal

He Who on the eighth day deigned to be circumcised in the flesh for our salvation, Christ our true God. . .



Prayers for the Churching of a Child On the Fortieth Day After Birth

On the fortieth day after birth, the infant is brought to the temple in order to be churched, i.e., the beginning of his entrance into the Church. He is brought by his mother, together with the intended sponsor when he will be baptized. The mother with the infant standing in the porch or narthex, the priest shall give the blessing; then the prayers: Holy God. All-holy Trinity. Our Father, and then the exclamation by the priest.

The Dismissal Hymn. First Tone

Rejoice, thou who art full of grace, O Virgin Theotokos, for from thee hath risen the Sun of righteousness, Christ our God, enlightening those in darkness. Rejoice thou also, O righteous Elder, as thou receivest in thine arms the Redeemer of our souls, Who also granteth unto us the resurrection.

The mother shall bow her head, and the priest signeth the seal of the cross over her, and touching her head, he shall say:

Let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.

O Lord God Almighty, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who by Thy Word hast fashioned every nature,

both that which is reason-endowed and that which is not, Who hath brought all things from nothing into being, we pray to Thee and implore Thee: Receive Thy handmaid (*name*), whom in Thy will Thou hast preserved, as she draweth nigh to Thy holy Church, and vouchsafe her to partake without condemnation of Thy holy Mysteries.

[If the child be not among the living, the prayer is ended here, with the exclamation by the priest: For a good and man-befriending God art Thou, and unto Thee do we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

But if the infant be living, the priest shall touch the head of the infant and say:]

And bless this child born of her, grant him (*her*) increase; sanctify him (*her*); enlighten him (*her*); render him (*her*) chaste; and endow him (*her*) with good understanding. For Thou hast brought him (*her*) into being and shown him (*her*) the material light, so that he (*she*) be deemed worthy also of the spiritual light, at a time Thou hast ordained, and be numbered with Thy holy flock through Thine Only-begotten Son, with Whom Thou art blest, together with Thine all-holy and good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Then immediately a prayer for the mother of the child.

O Lord our God, Who camest for the salvation of the race of man, come also upon Thy handmaid (*name*) and through the prayers of the venerable presbytery, vouchsafe